



Martin J. Chávez, Mayor

# City WellNews

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Insurance & Benefits Division

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## Its Time to Spring Into Health!

The City of Albuquerque is proud to announce our eleventh Employee Wellness Fair which will be held on Friday March 20, 2009 at the Albuquerque Convention Center, East Complex, Brazos room. The upcoming Employee Wellness fair will focus on the treatment and prevention of Heart Disease and Good Nutrition. You will have the opportunity to find out what you can do to decrease your risk for heart disease and ensure that you and your family are eating well. This health fair will also include:

- Free Health Screenings
- Heart Disease Education
- Physical Activity Zones
- Great Giveaways and Door Prizes
- Free Chair Massages

By participating fully in the health fair you will be eligible to enter a drawing for the Grand Prize or one of many door prizes. Employee family members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

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## March is National Nutrition Month

### 10 Tips for Healthy Eating on the Run

You probably eat out a lot—most Americans do. People are looking for fast, easy and good-tasting foods to fit a busy lifestyle. Whether it's carry-out, food court, office cafeteria or sit-down restaurant, there are smart choices everywhere. Here are 10 tips to help you eat healthy when eating out.

- Think ahead and plan where you will eat.
- Take time to look over the menu and make careful selections.
- Read restaurant menus carefully for clues to fat and calorie content.
- Menu terms that can mean more fat and calories: batter-fried, pan-fried, buttered, creamed, crispy, and breaded.
- Order the regular or child-size portion.
- It's OK to make special requests, just keep them simple.
- Hunger can drive you to eat too much bread before your meal arrives. Hold the bread or chips until your meal is served.
- Think about your food choices for the entire day.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Order one dessert with enough forks for everyone at the table to have a bite.

### Step Up to Nutrition and Health



Source: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

## Thinking About Quitting Tobacco?

The body gets more than nicotine when a person smokes. There are more than 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke. Some of them are also in wood varnish, the insect poison DDT, arsenic, nail polish remover, and rat poison.

The ashes, tar, gases, and other poisons in cigarettes harm your body over time. They damage your heart and lungs. They also make it harder for you to taste and smell things, and fight infections.

If you are a smoker or chew tobacco, you probably know by now that quitting tobacco is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your health. Are you ready? Keep in mind that when you want to stop smoking or chewing- or even just find out more about getting ready to quit- there is a lot of help available to you. Both **Presbyterian** and **CIGNA** have programs to help their members stop using tobacco. Whether you have smoked for 20 years or chewed tobacco for 5, we have skilled staff to help you be successful in quitting. In addition to these programs there are resources through the New Mexico Quit Line and American Lung Association that are free to community members. For more information please contact:

### **Presbyterian, The QUITLINE**

1-888-840-5445

### **CIGNA HealthCare, Quit Today:**

1-866-417-QUIT or visit [www.myCIGNA.com](http://www.myCIGNA.com)

### **American Lung Association, Freedom From Smoking**

505-265-0732

### **New Mexico Tobacco Quit Line**

1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT NOW)

Source: [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

## Volunteering Improves Your Health

Volunteers help themselves to better health while helping others. This is according to a recent study released by the Corporation for National and Community Service that reviews a compelling collection of recent scientific research.

*The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research* has found a significant connection between volunteering and good health. The report shows that volunteers have greater longevity, higher functional ability, lower rates of depression and less incidence of heart disease.

Research suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to the health of older adults and those who serve 100 hours annually. Other impressive findings include:

- A Duke University study found that people who volunteered after experiencing a heart attack reported reductions in depression and despair.
- A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.
- Another study found that volunteering led to lower rates of depression in people who are 65 and older.
- An analysis of longitudinal data found that individuals over 70 who volunteered approximately 100 hours had less of a decline in self-reported health and functioning levels, experienced lower levels of depression, and had more longevity.
- Two studies found that the volunteering threshold is about 100 hours per year, or about two hours a week. Individuals who reached the threshold enjoyed significant health benefits, although there were not additional benefits beyond the 100-hour mark.

If you are interested in finding out more about local volunteer opportunities please contact Debra Saine with the City's MOVE program at 767-5815 or visit <http://www.cabq.gov/move> for more information.



Source: [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

## Understanding Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

MS preferentially affects women, young adults, and Caucasians. MS affects approximately twice as many women as men. MS can be diagnosed at any age, but the age of disease onset typically ranges from 10 years to 59 years, with incidence rising steadily from the teens to age 35 years and declining gradually thereafter. Men usually have a slightly later age of onset than women. Caucasians of Northern and Central European ancestry are at highest risk of developing MS, although people of all races and ethnicity may be affected.

MS is thought to be an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS consists of the brain, spinal cord, and the optic nerves. Surrounding and protecting the nerve fibers of the CNS is a fatty tissue called myelin, which helps nerve fibers conduct electrical impulses. In MS, myelin is lost in multiple areas, leaving scar tissue called *sclerosis*. These damaged areas are also known as plaques or lesions. Sometimes the nerve fiber itself is damaged or broken. Myelin not only protects nerve fibers, but also makes their job possible. When myelin or the nerve fiber is destroyed or damaged, the ability of the nerves to conduct electrical impulses to and from the brain is disrupted, and this produces the various symptoms of MS.

Common symptoms of MS include fatigue, weakness, spasticity, balance problems, bladder and bowel problems, numbness, vision loss, tremors and depression. Not all symptoms affect all MS patients. No two persons have the same complaints; no one develops all of the symptoms.

Symptoms may be persistent or may cease from time to time. Most patients have episodic patterns of attacks and remissions throughout the course of the disease. Depending on the location of the lesion, the MS patient may experience various signs and symptoms. For example: an optic nerve lesion may cause blurred vision; a brain stem lesion may cause dizziness or double vision; a spinal cord lesion may cause coordination/balance problems.

By themselves, there are no specific tests that can determine if a person has MS or is likely to have it in the future. Current diagnosis of MS involves both clinical and paraclinical evidence. Clinical evidence consists of a history and neurological exam and paraclinical consists of MRI, Spinal Tap and Evoked Potential Tests.

Evoked Potential tests include visual evoked potentials (VEP's), brain stem auditory evoked potentials (BAEP's) and somatosensory evoked potentials (SSEP's). These are procedures where electrodes are placed on the head and body. Response is recorded to determine where delays in nerve transmission occur.

Early treatment of MS is critical. Studies indicate that early treatment delays disability by decreasing the injury to the nervous system caused by the disease. Treatment falls into two categories. The first category includes treatments that address symptom management, and the second category includes treatments that change the course of the disease by modifying the number and severity of attacks and the progression of the disability. Both have made significant progress in treatments in the last decade. The FDA has approved six different products as disease modifying treatments since 1993. Some facts about MS are:

- MS is not contagious or directly inherited
- Most people with MS have a normal or near normal life expectancy
- The majority of people with MS do not become severely disabled
- There are now FDA approved drugs that have shown to modify or slow down the underlying cause of MS.

Sources: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) & [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org)

### Mayor's Monthly Green Tip

**Eat Local.** When we visit the grocery store in this day and age, it isn't uncommon to see tomatoes from Holland or pineapple in the winter. Within the last 20 years, we've become accustomed to eating food that's rarely grown roots in local soil. In fact, most produce grown in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles before it gets sold.

Our eating habits have an enormous impact on the health of the planet. By choosing to eat differently, and focusing on local and organic produce, we can curb air pollution and global warming, avoid toxic pesticides, support local farmers and enjoy fresh, tasty food.

Source: [www.greenlivingtips.com](http://www.greenlivingtips.com) & [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

## March Wellness Tips

### Nutrition Tip

**To spread or to dip.** Some restaurants serve olive oil, rather than butter, with bread. The good news is that olive oil is certainly a healthier choice since the olive oil contains mostly monounsaturated fat, instead of saturated fat found in butter. The bad news is that you can potentially end up consuming more than twice the number of calories because bread acts like a sponge and soaks up the oil. Though it isn't as much fun, use your knife to spread a thin layer of the olive oil.

### Fitness Tip

**When was the last time you tried to touch your toes?** Stand up, take a deep breath in and on the exhale bend over and reach for your toes. Find the distance that is comfortable and hold in that position for a few seconds. Repeat several times and notice where your fingertips fall. Continue to do this every other day and see if by the end of the year you can get your maximum reach closer to the floor.

### Health Tip

If you smoke, seriously consider quitting. It is the single best thing you can do for your life. For more help in your efforts, log onto [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or use any of the FREE resources located on page 2.

### Topics you would like us to discuss in City WellNews?

**Contact:**

**JD Maes**

**jmaes@cabq.gov 768-2921**

### Questions about Insurance & Benefits?

**Contact:**

**The Insurance & Benefits Office  
768-3758**

## March Fruit of the Month



### Guava

Guava is an oval shaped fruit that varies in size from a small egg to a medium apple. The thin skin may be yellow, red, purple or nearly black and the flesh ranges from a pale yellow to a bright red.

Guava is sweet with a slight tart aftertaste. Its texture is firm; similar to an apple. Guava is native to South America, but is now commonly grown in California, Florida and Hawaii. It is also known as a Bangkok Apple or Guayaba.

### Tropical Fruit Salad with Guava Sauce

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals 1 1/2 cups of fruit or vegetables

#### Ingredients

2 bananas, sliced  
1 ripe pear, sliced  
4 kiwis, peeled and sliced  
2 cups sliced strawberries  
2 feijoas  
2 Tbsp orange juice concentrate  
1 ripe guava

Combine all of the ingredients, except for the juice and guava, in a large serving bowl. Peel and slice the guava into quarters and place in a blender with the orange juice concentrate. Puree until smooth. Pour the mixture through a sieve to remove the seeds and pour over the fruit salad.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 212, Fat 2g, Calories from Fat 6%, Protein 3g, Carbohydrates 52g, Fiber 9g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 8mg.

[Source:www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)